

JDW:

WxPost-CIA Coverage

HW 1/27/76

Every once in a while I get the impression that the Post's non-coverage of CIA stories is angled to the interest of the "liberal" CIA wing. If you have a clear impression and have the time after comparing treatments for the past several days - with NYTimes' - I'd appreciate your opinion.

I mean news rather than editorial. Geyelin has a clear prejudice at least, the only surprising thing being its high visibility/ on ed and oped pages.

I have to merely skim the paper rapidly these days, when I clip and lay the clips aside for rest periods of reading time. Today I got an old story, this time the exceptional with the Post, credit to AP, undated, on the spooking at 3 colleges and the p. 1 on the recommendation to end DIA.

There was not much, I think not anything at all, in yesterday's Post, whereas radio and TV weekend coverage, unless I recall incorrectly, did carry several items, including this one of the colleges. There is, of course, the possibility that the Times had an exclusive leak of the House Report, but again I have the impression the Post was late picking it and the Jackson story up. If there is but a day's lag I have the wrong impression with a Times beat on a story.

What makes this more important is that what I've feared for a long time is about to become the reality, the approval of illegal acts in the guise of regulating them, and not by the CIA alone. And the agencies are using the current interest to unload enough to inure, to make the people insensitive to any further exposure and wrongdoing. The net result is to give them more power to do more wrong and in each case to influence national policy, foreign and domestic.

I don't recall how much of this has been in the carbons I've sent you but probably my real doubts came with the forming of the Rockefeller Commission. If not then certainly by the time the direction of the Church and House committees became clear.

Now, when anyone can wield a rubber stamp and we've forced out thousands of pages of documents illegally classified there is talk of a law making it criminal to leak or publish any classified document. A more perfect mechanism for suppression I can't imagine and it will make for more authoritarianism.

I have yet to see a classified document classified for any purpose related to national security. In virtually if not all cases, the real reason was to hide wrongdoing or avoid embarrassment.

Now it will be criminal, with this change, to expose wrongdoing.

Best,

Dear Jim, add 2, Post & Oswald tapping; the risen Specter

11/27/76

I monitored all-news radio from about 4:45 to ~~about 6:10~~ ^{after 6:10} a.m. It was productive.

It leads to other conjectures about what may be up, too.

About 5:35 WAVA had a long segment that included a quotation of what Phillips said yesterday, what would have been fit for evening TV use and certainly was in time for it: "Soviets and Cubans did not think very much of Lee Harvey Oswald so they didn't push him into killing JFK" is attributed to Phillips. Shades of Nosenko!

There was self-defamation by Downings: this was all news to him and it is coming out because of FOIA. There sure do need some informed people on the staff or at least some who read newspapers and have memories. And the FOIA wonders will never cease, as the uses of it on this subject by newspapers won't. While Bud works his own wonders.

At ~~6:10~~ 6:10 the NBC Baltimore all-news WBAL FM had a long segment from Philadelphia. It it Specter denied any pressure to reach a pre-determined conclusion as to "name" LHO. "I took my lead from" Warren. He then extolled Warren. He added that there have been "no disclosures" to challenge any of the Commission's conclusions or that would change anything. They he qualified this a little, a la Belin. They knew nothing of the plots against Castro's life or of the destruction of the LHO note by Hosty.

How could anyone have known about the Hosty destructions? After all he only swore to them. (No, Specter did not question him before the Commission-Stern did -4H44Off. And only Marina and Ruth Paine testified to LHO's having delivered the note.)

I wish I knew more about yesterday's developments. There may have been much that did not get electronic coverage within my hearing. But based on what I know there was a fairly immediately and very sudden, out-of-character switch. I believe it has to have significance and to represent officialdom.

I have enough of Phillips' cables from Mexico City to know that what he is now saying could not be more completely opposite what he was battering against the Washington heads. He was so excessive that Langley had to direct him to break Alvarado Ugarte down and even how to do it. This Alvarado Ugarte remains on "D" to CIA and Schweiker.

Until yesterday the CIA was insisting that Nosenko's word could not be taken and wasn't. Now they are saying exactly what Nosenko did about Oswald.

WAVA did not have Phillips on tape. The ambiguity may be from the wire service. It has Oswald the killer and falls short of exculpating the Russians. However, it will be taken as exculpating them. Why this abrupt change in the midst of all these stories about the CIA's responsibility because it was trying to off Castro and he kicked back? Blaming this on JFK will not be enough to clear it. They have to have another inspiration in mind. Now I do not think they'll depend on the lone-mut approach. At least not for long. I think it not impossible that there will be an amending, to make LHO the killer but with a conspiracy. Shudder over the possible co-conspirators.

Suggestions, conjectures welcome. Now I'll see if the paper is here.

Our local a.m. had nothing, indicating nothing on AP B wire.

The Post head and story say the committee will question Phillips. Not anyone now in CIA or those in charge of liaison with Warren Commission. If this was bait it has been taken. In this event there will likely be CIA memos on verbal communications or those who have "recollections" that some staffer was told. The nature of staff memos makes this possible and the CIA has the memos. I've gotten some from it I did not get from the Archives.

Kessler still ~~has~~ not reported that Phillips was station chief or what he reported. Or whether the FBI's LEGAT there was privy, as the CIA cables show he was to much. I'd like to have time to reread them. Nor does the Post carry the opinion that the Russians were not pushing Oswald, whatever that means.

Meanwhile the committee is off and running with the hounds on the false spoor, exactly what I warned them all about, including Sprague personally and Downing through Bud & Rick.

Surprising Mo has had no interest.